



## First African-American female U-2 pilot takes flight

*By 1st Lt. Jessica Martin*  
9th Reconnaissance Wing  
Public Affairs

**BEALE AIR FORCE BASE, Calif.** – Once again making history, the Air Force wrote another page recently when the first female African-American U-2 pilot took flight.

Capt. Merryl David successfully completed her first of several solo flights on a clear fall morning, followed in a Chevy Camaro by her instructor Maj. Jon Huggins.

Growing up in the Bronx, N.Y., Captain David set sights on her goal. "Since I was seven or eight I knew I wanted to fly," she said. Focusing on math and science, she went on to study electrical engineering at the University of New Haven, West Haven, Conn.

After graduating from college, she was commissioned through Officer Candidate School into the U.S. Navy. "I wanted to be an astronaut, and historically most astronauts are naval aviators."



**Capt. Merryl David, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron U-2 pilot, receives last-minute tips from Maj. Jon Huggins, 1st RS U-2 instructor pilot, before her first U-2 solo flight. Captain David is the first African-American female U-2 pilot. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Joesph De Vega)**

One of her assignments landed her at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, as a T-6 instructor. There she became familiar with the Air Force's mission and aircraft.

She progressed through a 10-year career flying T-34s, and SH-60Bs, helicopters used for anti-submarine and anti-surface war-

fare. Captain David also served in the Gulf and South America before realizing she wanted to cross over into the Air Force and fly the U-2 Dragon Lady.

U-2 applicants are required to meet flying time requirements, and their breadth and depth of experience are closely looked at. Only about 38

percent of those who apply are selected.

Four months after submitting her package, Captain David was selected for an interview.

But before being chosen for the job, she had to prove herself in interviews with squadron and group

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# We have a lot to be thankful for

By Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson  
8th Air Force commander

Happy Thanksgiving!

This year as we prepare to sit down to holiday meals with all the trimmings, we have much to be thankful for.

We live in a free country where we can speak our minds and choose our leaders, as we did only a few weeks ago. This freedom came at a high price for our forefathers, and continues to cost our brothers and sisters their lives to protect. Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to all those who fought to give us this freedom, and those who still fight to keep it, including those from our 8th Air Force family. This year many "Mighty Eighth" members returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom. We are grateful for their service.

Although many still seek to subvert our safety, security and freedoms, the United States can be thankful of our many successes this year. Saddam Hussein is behind bars, there have been elections in Afghanistan, and many terrorists have been arrested or killed.

The "Mighty Eighth" has also had numerous successes to be grateful for this year, including the conclusion of the execution phase of the Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment '04, and the opening of the Combined Air Operations Center here.

We can also be thankful of the prosperity of our nation.

No other nation in the world has near the social and economic blessings we enjoy.

The relationships we have are another reason to be grateful. Our spouses and families, our co-workers and friends have all touched our lives in remarkable ways. It is said you can tell a lot about a person by the friends

they keep. If so, being a member of the "Mighty Eighth" family speaks volumes of each of you. I'm truly thankful for each of you.

I echo the sentiments of our 16th President in the proclamation that created this special day when he wrote, "It has seemed to me fit and proper that they [the many blessings our nation enjoys] should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People."

Please enjoy this all-American holiday with your loved ones and a thankful spirit.

God bless our great nation!



## The "Mighty Eighth" Voice

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# Employers of 8 AF reservists get first-hand look at their mission

By Senior Airman Ebony Nichols  
917th Wing Public Affairs

**BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La.** – Some landed safely, and some crashed and burned. This is just one of the experiences employers of reservists encountered during the 917th Wing Employer Appreciation Day 2004.

Once a year, members of the 917th hope to give their employers a better understanding of what their workday is like during a normal unit training assembly and how this contributes to the overall Air Force mission.

In the military, members get an early understanding of just how important it is to make their superiors happy. As reservists, it is even more important to maintain good rapport with their civilian employers.

The day started off with reservists welcoming their civilian employers with a morning reception, followed by an information briefing on the Air Force Reserve and the importance of weekend warriors.

“Basically, I wanted my employer to better understand the demand of the Reserve and the importance of the overall mission,” said Maj. John



**Mr. Mark Wilson and sponsor Maj. Brady Glick, assistant operations officer for the 47th Fighter Squadron, view an A-10 cockpit during Employer Appreciation Day. (Photo by Senior Airman Ebony Nichols)**

Farraro, 917th Explosive Ordnance Flight commander.

Many employers were excited about witnessing how their employee contributes to the defense of America, and others mainly were interested in their reservists' accomplishments during a regular UTA.

“I was interested to know more about what goes on in the Air Force. I

always hear about it, and thought it would be quite interesting to see,” said Mark Wilson, an assistant manager for Wal-Mart who accompanied Staff Sgt. Michele Collison, 917th Logistics Readiness Squadron inventory management clerk.

Following a morning briefing, employers were given an up close and personal presentation of the B-

52 and A-10. The employers also had the opportunity to sit in the cockpit and view other areas of the aircraft. After visiting the static displays, employers separated into groups and were whisked away to three stations geared to show them how different organizations complete the mission.

The employers' first experience began with the 47th Fighter Squadron Life Support.

Tech. Sgt. Steve Shockley, aircrew life support attendant, showed employers the equipment that pilots use and gave them possible scenarios they may encounter during flight.

“The best part was seeing night vision and wearing the goggles,” said Ms. Susan Sayes, who accompanied her husband, Mr. Aubrey Sayes, Plain Dealing Middle/High School principal, and Lt. Col. Bill Reynolds, chief of 917th Military Equal Opportunity. “I was also very amazed by the equipment pilots wear,” she said.

The second station for employers was the A-10 simulator full mission trainer. Members watched their employers try their hand at flying and landing the aircraft.

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## 8 AF Historical Society honors aircrew, NCO

By Tech. Sgt. Jeff Loftin  
8th Air Force Public Affairs

An aircrew and a maintenance troop were recently honored by the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society at their annual reunion.

The society awarded the crew of "ICER 33" with the 2003 General Ira C. Eaker Outstanding Airmanship Award for a mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

ICER 33 made history March 23, 2003, as the first B-52 crew to successfully employ conventional air launched cruise missiles and joint direct attack munitions on the same sortie. Prior to takeoff the Minot Air Force Base, N.D., crew received a high-priority mission change where loss of the aircraft and crew "was acceptable".

Prior to a planned cruise missile launch, the crew received "flex" re-targeting instructions requiring complex replanning of missile mission data within minutes of the planned launches.

After successfully destroying the Baghdad Directorate of Military Intelligence, the crew proceeded to three Al Nida Republican Guard Armored Division staging areas located under the umbrella of Iraqi air defenses east of downtown Baghdad.

With only one minute to the release point and unwilling to release for fear of striking another coalition aircraft, the crew locked the weapons while continuing to await clearance. With just 20 seconds remaining in the envelope, the crew was finally given clearance. The crew immediately unlocked the weapons, but received a malfunction. With just 15 seconds remaining in the launch envelope, the crew resolved the malfunction and released the JDAM payload.



**Master Sgt. Hector Vara, Lt. Col. Philip Robinson and Chief Master Sgt. Kenneth Ward pose with Master Sgt. Rufino Gonzales, center left, who won the 8th Air Force Pursuit of Excellence Aircraft and Munitions Award. (Courtesy photo)**

One minute after release, the crew was engaged by a surface-to-air missile. The pilots immediately executed defensive maneuvers while the Electronic Warfare Officer dispensed expendables and countered the missile as the crew exited the threat area unscathed.

The AWACS then informed the crew all other assets had to leave the area due to the high-threat concentration. The ICER 33 crew was responsible for striking 20 critical targets from a single sortie despite strong Iraqi defenses.

"Unforgettable is the word that comes to mind," said Lt. Col. Robert Hyde, of ICER 33. "That night over Baghdad is indelibly etched in our minds as a time when we were focused on a mission with significantly increased risk, when our training paid off and when we've never been so

glad to have the help of three EA-6B Prowlers.

"The night of the award was unforgettable in a very different way. The room was filled with the men and women of the Mighty Eighth Air Force whose stories we've read, watched and studied, the same Eighth Air Force we're a part of today. What a privilege and honor it was to receive an award from a group of heroes unparalleled in bomber crew lore. I might forget the sound of my copilot calling the missile launch over Baghdad, but I'll never forget the sound of those 80-year-old Eighth Air Force warriors giving our crew a standing ovation in Kansas City."

The other members of ICER 33 included: Maj. (now retired) Philip

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Hacker, Capt Mark Dmytryszyn, Maj. Alexander Wylie, and 1st Lt. Joshua Holmes.

The 8th AF Historical Society also recognized Master Sgt. Rufino Gonzalez lauding contributions which earned him the Pursuit of Excellence Aircraft and Munitions Award.

Sergeant Gonzalez's leadership led to the

completion of four time compliance technical orders at a forward operating location in lieu of returning the aircraft to home station, which saved more than 240 flight hours and \$4 million in fuel costs.

He also spearheaded the creation of a forward operating location paint facility to integrate corrosion and deployed phase inspec-

tions. His efforts prevented deployed fleet grounding actions due to overdue inspections and potential corroded airframes, ultimately returning 2,707 combat flight hours to the Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom two-front war.

"I felt truly humbled to be in the presence of so many great Americans during the 8th AF Historical

Society Gala and deeply honored to represent the 'Mighty Eighth' as their Outstanding Maintenance Manager for 2003," said Gonzalez. "We are forever grateful for the many sacrifices these veterans have endured and only hope to further maintain the fighting spirit legacy they have embedded on our Air Force for many years to come."

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leaders, undergo mission orientation, mobile rides, a flight physical, egress training, and hours of briefings for U-2 sorties.

"I really wanted to be selected because the squadron had the detachment mentality that I was used to, and a community that I would like," said Captain David. "I knew it would be a good experience."

She joined the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron in April 2004, began training on T-38s in May and completed her academic portion in August.

Moving on to U-2s, she experi-

enced three weeks of flying with an instructor before making her solo debut. "Of all the aircraft I've flown, it was the most memorable solo," said Captain David.

Before graduating to the 99th Reconnaissance Squadron she'll have totaled 23 flights, to include both dual and solo low and high flights, and be a qualified chase car driver.

The road to becoming a U-2 pilot can be a long one; Initial Qualification and Mission Qualification Training can take from five to seven months.

Once completed, Captain David

will join the ranks of less than 80 pilots worldwide.

"You don't see many black females flying in any service," she said. "I hope this can motivate young girls so they can see that this is an option they can take."

"It's an honor getting this opportunity," said Captain David.

"If I became an astronaut it would be the icing on the cake," she said. "But I'm extremely happy with what I'm doing now."

*(Information collected from the 9th Reconnaissance Wing web site)*

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"It was very neat and a great experience to simulate flying the plane," said Mr. Kenny Chance, a manager from Applied Industrial Technologies who was sponsored by Staff Sgt. Wade Janes, chaplain assistant with the 917th Wing Chaplains Office.

After employers tried their hands at piloting, they moved on to the Fire Arms

Training Simulator where they were given the quick-and-easy on loading, charging, holding and firing the simulated M-16. During the various scenarios, employers tested their accuracy on firing the weapon in a hostile environment.

"It (FATS) was awesome," said Ms. Tracy Harris, a Newton Smith Elementary principal and ci-

vilian supervisor to Master Sgt. Orlisa Johnson, 917th Medical Squadron medical services attendant. "It gave me a greater appreciation for what servicemen do."

Employers experienced a brief stint of performing in various career fields and then ended the day touring their employees' military work areas.

"Every month I have to

let them (reservists) off, and now I know how they are working," said Mr. Sylvester Marshall, who accompanied Tech. Sgt. William Hannah, 917th Maintenance Operations Squadron maintenance operations controller. "I've noticed that reservists and guard members are better employees. They are easy to give orders to."

# Airmen earn medals for valor while deployed

By Airman 1st Class Katie Booher  
5th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

**MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D.** — For repeated valor under enemy fire, three Airmen here were recently awarded medals for heroic or meritorious achievement in connection with operations against opposing armed forces while deployed to Iraq.

Tech. Sgts. Jason Hohenstreiter and Chris Villeneuve and Senior Airman Robert Hunyor, all with the 5th Logistics Readiness Squadron, earned Bronze Star medals for their support to vehicle convoys traveling across the country. The three Airmen were deployed to an Army base as part of a team designed to augment Army forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"We were security escorts for the civilian supply trucks," Sergeant Hohenstreiter said. "We escorted supply trucks from the border of Turkey to our base, and

some we escorted to other forward operating locations."

When they first arrived in Iraq in March, things were quiet, but in April tensions mounted. Sergeant Hohenstreiter and Airman Hunyor were caught in a firefight during one of their convoy missions.

"We were outside of Baghdad headed to Mosul when we took fire, and from then on it was nonstop for an hour and a half," Airman Hunyor said. "It was the longest engagement in our deployment. [Once we were out of the kill zone], we ended up hiding out in Baghdad International [Airport] for a couple days."

Sergeant Villeneuve also came face-to-face with danger when an improvised explosive device exploded 75

feet in front of his vehicle.

"IEDs are usually planted on the side of the road. Then [the enemy] waits for the trucks to come by and blow them up. [The aggressors] were mainly aiming for the gun trucks with the 50-caliber machine guns in them, but I just happened to be in front," he said. "[The

convoy] got out of the kill zone, got into our box formation and did accountability. We then reported into the higher headquarters who sent the [explosive ordnance disposal team] out to sweep the area and we just kept going."

To prepare for their tour of duty, the three went through a series of short survival courses before they deployed and also in theater.

"The Army spun up a one-week short school [for Air Force members] in Fort Leonard Wood, [Mo.], and taught us how to drive the M-series trucks and taught us some of their procedures," Sergeant Hohenstreiter said. "We went to Camp Virginia, Kuwait, where we received war training from the Army and Army contractors on how they run convoy operations and use radio equipment. We eventually got trained sufficiently enough to get us up north [to our permanent base in Iraq]."

All three Airmen would agree their training paid off.

"We're here. The only way you know if you pass or if you're certified is if you get to go home safe," Sergeant Villeneuve said.

"Don't take the training for granted," Airman Hunyor said. "The training is there and it saved my life. The first time I got fired at, the training kicked in and went automatic."

*"We were outside Baghdad headed to Mosul when we took fire..."*

Senior Airman Robert Hunyor  
5th Logistics Readiness Squadron

## Joint exercise tests Barksdale's skills, abilities

By J. Manny Guendulay  
2nd Bomb Wing Public Affairs

**BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La.** — The 2d Bomb Wing underwent a test of its ability to prepare people and aircraft for directed tasks.

The exercise involved a variety of squadrons on base from maintenance to security forces.

This exercise comes right after the Conventional Operations Readiness

Exercise held earlier this month. Lt. Col. Jon Johnson, director of wing exercises and evaluations, says that the major difference is that this is a U.S. Strategic Command exercise instead of an Air Combat Command-level inspection and though it tests the readiness of the Mighty Deuce, it also allows for creativity in how the wing ensures operational readiness.

"We're not being inspected this time, because we passed one last year," Colonel Johnson said. "And

when we don't get an inspection, it allows us to show a little more creativity in the way the exercise is done. When there's an inspection the focus is on the basic requirements, but in this exercise we're exploring a bunch of different options available to STRATCOM and what they are asking us to do is 'let's try this' and 'let's try that' instead of just saying 'do what's normally expected of you and

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## New e-mail policy in effect

The Air Force recently released a new electronic messaging policy. The policy became effective Oct. 27. The new policy states:

“Electronic messaging will replace or supplement formal Air Force formats for communications like official memorandums, messages, orders, taskings, or letters. This includes messages and other communications exchanged between organizational elements in support of command and control, combat service support, and other functional activities.

“Users will not add slogans, quotes, special backgrounds, special stationeries, digital images, unusual fonts, etc., routinely to their official or individual electronic messages. Users must consider professional image and conservation of Air Force network resources (bandwidth).”

For more information, see Air Force Instruction 33-119.

## First ‘unmanned’ flight



**WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. — Maj. Kristin Goodwin and Capt. Jenn Jeffords, 325th Bomb Squadron, became the first female crew to fly a B-2 Spirit bomber Oct. 18. The pilots flew a 3.5-hour sortie in the Spirit of Mississippi. They also refueled with a KC-135 Tanker from Altus Air Force Base, Okla., and practiced conventional bombing. Major Goodwin has been a B-2 pilot since May 2002. Captain Jeffords became B-2 certified in August. (Photo by Airman Jason Burton)**

### ● EXERCISE, from page 6

let’s see how that turns out.”

Capt. David McMillan, 2d Operations Support Squadron intelligence officer, notes the significance of the exercise.

“The exercise gives us a realistic look at critical world events that could lead to military involvement and eventual 2d BW mission tasking in support of our nation’s strategic defense,” Captain McMillan said. “Realizing that only a select few units/organizations in our nation’s military participate in such an important exercise makes part of this successful exercise.”

Several units have been

tasked for this exercise such as the 2d OSS where Lt. Col. Steve Kram, chief of strategic plans, said his office has been busy during the exercise. “Since 2d OSS special weapons operations is responsible for this exercise support, our entire shop was involved with the exercise,” said Col. Kram. “We’ve had continuous shifts working within the battlestaff at the Warrior Center, conducting aircrew briefings, and operating our “Cajun Ops” aircrew control center. Aircrew from the 11th, 20th and 96th Bomb Squadrons augmented “Cajun Ops,” processing alert crews through

their generation actions. After Tuesday’s exercise alert response and aircraft re-configuration, our office spent the second part of the week preparing for the alert response and fly-off exercise scheduled for today.”

Lt. Col. Larry Littrell, 2d Operational Support was also busier at the beginning of this exercise compared to past exercises, but was able to maintain their workload.

“Our office has performed superbly,” Colonel Littrell said. “With as many changes from previous exercises in an operation of this magnitude, I expected there to be significant obstacles.

We handled all of them with the ease and professionalism that 2d Bomb Wing warriors are noted for. We did a lot of coordination with agencies outside of the wing to make sure the exercise was realistic while demonstrating our true capabilities.”

Colonel Littrell believes this exercise is also important because of the long term affects.

“During the exercise, the wing had to manage a lot of expectations on the way we do business, because this exercise has set the template for the way we will exercise in the future,” the colonel said.

# Film-based imagery not obsolete

By Lt. Col. Barry Leister  
9th Intelligence Squadron  
commander

**BEALE AIR FORCE BASE, Calif.** – In a world of advancing digital technology, film-based imagery is often discounted as old, outdated and obsolete – think again. The 9th Intelligence Squadron here, still processes film collected by the U-2 employing the Optical Bar Camera and then exploits and disseminates imagery intelligence to United States and coalition forces.

Every week, the 9th IS conducts missions from its in-garrison, fixed film-production laboratory to provide combat forces in the Central Command area of responsibility imagery intelligence. The imagery is used for combat operations, mission planning, force protection and reconstruction efforts.

In addition, the squadron processes, exploits and disseminates OBC imagery collected from the 9th Reconnaissance Wing's U-2 aircraft. These missions are flown from Beale AFB and most imagery is of USAF bombing ranges and the United States' northern and southwest borders and support USAF fighter-bomber training, as well as national counter-narcotics programs and homeland defense.

In addition to the unit's fixed laboratory, the 9th IS employs the Deployable Shelterized System-Film, part of the Distributed Common Ground System. The DSS-F



**Airman Jaclyn McDonald adjusts tracking on a Niagara III continuous contact printer in preparation for an Optical Bar Camera mission. (Courtesy photo)**

is used when joint force commanders need their capability closer to the fight.

Since 2000, the squadron has deployed to provide broad-area, synoptic and high-resolution imagery to the warfighter. After tremendous mission success in operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, the unit continues to support the Global War on Terrorism from Beale AFB. Despite a busy mission schedule, the 9th IS maintains and trains on the DSS-F in anticipation of future deployments.

The DSS-F consists of 24 vans that fit together like a large jigsaw puzzle. This platform is unique because it is the Department of Defense's only deployable, long-roll film-based imagery production capability. Continuous training is

necessary to keep this small squadron deployment ready.

"It's great to see how the experienced people work hand in hand with the new folks," said Senior Master Sgt. Mark Cormier, 9th IS superintendent. "We have a lot of new troops and they pick things up quickly."

Although current operations around the world make in-garrison operations the most logical choice, the unit is ready to deploy on a moment's notice to conduct imagery intelligence operations anywhere around the world.

"Even in a world of digital sensors and remotely piloted aircraft, there is no better combination than the U-2 and the OBC for collecting battlefield intelligence over a very large area with high resolution," said Col. YuLin Bingle,

548th Intelligence Group commander.

The OBC 'fixes' the battlefield in time; this is known as synoptic coverage.

"It would take other sensors multiple days and sorties to collect what this capability collects in a single 6-hour mission," said Col. Bingle. "The resolution of digital sensors is gaining ground but still cannot compare to film-based imagery."

In the initial phases of a conflict, commanders need to know all the threats on the battlefield to formulate an effective campaign strategy. In a six-hour mission, the U-2 employing the OBC can collect over 90,000 square nautical miles (nearly the size of the state of California) of en-

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emy territory with clarity that lends itself to positive identification of enemy combatants and equipment.

Once threats are identified following exploitation of the OBC imagery, near real-time sensors flown on the U-2, Global Hawk or Predator can verify the location of enemy forces and provide their precise location to ground or air forces. This complementary relationship is key to executing the kill chain — find, fix, track, target, engage and assess. The result is combat success with minimal coalition and civilian casualties.

In addition to OBC's broad area and high-resolution coverage, it is releaseable to coalition partners. Sharing intelligence with our partners in the Global War on Terrorism makes them more effective at locating and attacking insurgents and strengthens ties between the U.S. and the coalition.

Since OBC technology is unclassified, the film and associated products may be released if the data itself collected is not classified. This becomes a valuable bargaining tool when negotiating access to third country territory, ports and airfields. It may also result in intelligence sharing arrangements where valuable third-country intelligence is provided to U.S. forces. This type of information is extremely critical in our current insurgency operations in the Global War on Terrorism.

The 9th IS realigned un-



**Staff Sgt. Raymond Mills cleans top rollers on an HTA continuous long-roll film processor in preparation for an Optical Bar Camera mission. (Courtesy photo)**

der the 480th Intelligence Wing when it became a wing in December. No one knows film-based imagery better than Col. Grundhauser as he was assigned to the 9th IS (formerly known as the 9th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron) as a lieutenant in the early 1980s. However, Col. Grundhauser's vision is not seated in the past; he has charted a flight plan to bring film-based imagery into the 21st century using cutting-edge technology and innovative processes.

"No other sensor can provide the coverage and fidelity

afforded through the use of film-based imagery and the Optical Bar Camera," said Col. Grundhauser. "The best course of action is to modernize where possible and make this imagery available faster and to a much wider audience."

Spring-boarding off successes of past conflicts, the squadron is improving upon a demonstration capability to digitize film and make it rapidly accessible to the warfighter. This has been a major innovation since moving to in-garrison operations following Operation

Iraqi Freedom.

Following processing and exploitation, the unit produces imagery reports and disseminates this intelligence to combat forces. Select portions of OBC film is captured by a high-resolution digital camera mounted above light tables. The high-fidelity digital image is then annotated to highlight activity on the image and sent to an Image Product Library to make the imagery available to national, joint and service organizations.

When larger areas are required by combat forces, the 9th IS uses high-speed scanners to capture the OBC 5 inch by 6 foot frames in digital format. As expected, the storage requirements for high-resolution imagery are extremely large, with each digitized frames being as large as 11 gigabytes. In fact, if an entire OBC mission were digitized, it would take up 20.2 terabytes of storage, equivalent to the storage found on over 30,000 CD ROMs.

Large files create dissemination challenges. To address this issue, the squadron uses the Defense Courier Service to deliver DVDs to warfighters.

Whether deployed with coalition forces or conducting operations from in-garrison, the Airmen of the 9th IS will supply imagery intelligence collected from the U-2 and Optical Bar Camera to provide combat forces with the intelligence they need to fight and win our nation's wars.